

#### 4VAC15-90-550 (New)

#### Game: Deer: Special elk hunting license – Conservation License Program

##### Summary:

The proposal establishes and outlines a program to award a wildlife conservation organization with a special elk hunting license for the Elk Management Zone.

##### Proposed language of the amendment:

#### 4VAC15-90-550. Special elk hunting license – Conservation License Program

- A. Upon receipt of a valid Conservation License Program application from an officer or other designated official representative of any individual, cooperator, or wildlife conservation organization, the Director or their designee shall verify the application materials and may select a program awardee annually. Applications must be received or postmarked no later than April 1<sup>st</sup> to be eligible for the Conservation License Program during that calendar year.
  - 1. For the purposes of this section, “individual, cooperators, or wildlife conservation organizations” means those people or entities whose mission is to promote and ensure the conservation of Virginia's wildlife resources and/or to promote opportunities for hunting, fishing, trapping, boating or other wildlife-related recreation within Virginia.
- B. A valid Conservation License Program application shall include:
  - 1) Cooperator or Organization’s name, name of the individual designated to submit and receive official correspondence, address for such correspondence, and a telephone number.
  - 2) Cooperator or Organization’s mission statement.
  - 3) A written application describing:
    - 1. Cooperator or Organization’s role in wildlife conservation in Virginia.
    - 2. Cooperator or Organization’s purpose and intent for requesting special elk hunting license through the Conservation License Program.
    - 3. Cooperator or Organization’s proposal for method of generating funds from transfer of the special elk hunting license to an eligible individual.
    - 4. Cooperator or Organization’s strategy to direct proceeds received from the transfer of the special elk hunting license and any matching funding toward wildlife conservation and/or wildlife-related recreation in Virginia’s Elk Management Zone.
- C. The Director shall establish a Conservation License Program Committee to review program applications and submit a recommendation to the Director to award no more than one (1) special elk hunting license to a cooperator or organization whose application is deemed to provide the greatest benefit to wildlife conservation and wildlife-related recreation in Virginia per license year. This committee shall be composed of a minimum of three (3) individuals and make a recommendation to the Director by May 1<sup>st</sup> each year.
- D. A cooperator or organization receiving a special elk hunting license must direct all proceeds from the transfer of such license, toward a project to improve and enhance wildlife habitat, wildlife populations, or wildlife-related recreation within the Elk Management Zone. The proposed strategy and requirements will be outlined in a memorandum of agreement between the Department and the cooperator or organization.
  - 1. For the purpose of this section “proceeds” means the amount of money received by the cooperator or organization from the transfer of a special elk hunting license minus

all expenses and administrative costs directly attributable to the transfer of the permit or the implementation of the defined project.

- E. A cooperator or organization may transfer the special elk hunting license to any person eligible to hunt in Virginia. The generation of funds from the transfer of the special elk hunting license may only be conducted through a raffle.
- F. Transfer of the special elk hunting license must be reported to the Department no less than one (1) month prior to the opening day of the elk hunting season during which the special elk hunting license is valid. To report a transfer to the Department, the cooperator or organization shall provide the department with the hunter's:
  - a. Name
  - b. Department customer identification number
  - c. Address
  - d. Telephone number
- G. A special elk hunting license transferee may be rejected if it is determined that the transferee has been convicted of 2 or more wildlife violations, within 3 years prior to the last date of the application period. In determining the transferees' eligibility, the Director shall take into account the nature and severity of the violations.
- H. A cooperator or organization awarded a special elk hunting license shall submit an annual report to the Department regarding any proceeds received from the transfer of the license and an accounting of how those funds were directed toward wildlife conservation or wildlife-related recreation in the Elk Management Zone.

### **Rationale:**

With the passage of § 29.1-305.01, authority was given to the Board of Wildlife Resources to establish guidelines permitting the transfer of special elk licenses to individuals, cooperators who assist in meeting agency hunting objectives, or wildlife conservation organizations whose mission is to ensure the conservation of Virginia's wildlife resources. This proposal exercises that authority by creating an opportunity for the Department to promote wildlife management efforts and projects within the EMZ by allowing a partner to generate funds from the transfer of a special elk hunting license. That cooperator or organization must demonstrate a history and ability to effectively implement wildlife management and outline a plan for generating the funding, designing a wildlife management project, and executing that project within the EMZ.

The method of fund raising, through the transfer of the special elk hunting license by the cooperator or conservation organization, is limit to a raffle in an effort to generate funds for wildlife management while still providing an equitable chance for any eligible person to receive the special elk hunting license. The creation of a review committee would promote a versatile and comprehensive review of the applications in order to make a recommendation to the director. A memorandum of agreement (MOA) between the Department and the cooperator or conservation organization will create a legal document that outlines project details and program requirements. This MOA, along with the required annual report, will create cooperation and accountability and ensure the projects funded through this program are having the most benefit possible to wildlife management efforts in the EMZ. The proposal that a license transferee with a recent and frequent history of wildlife violations may be rejected, will ensure that the limited opportunities that are available to hunt elk within the EMZ are not afforded to those that may not pursue them in a legal and ethical manner.